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1

Co Creating Social Emotional Communication between Preschoolers and their Families



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2

Components of Attachment and Great Social Emotional Communication

- Love
- Safety
- Protection
- Accurate Reflection
- Repair
- Fun



1


Accurate Reflection: Articulating the Flow of Experience

- Not echoing or paraphrasing
- Conveys an understanding of the person's experience and directs the person's attention to that experience so they can also perceive it and perceive that you 'get' it - this is true for a baby, child or adult
- Requires intense focus and empathetic absorption of the experience
- We are tracking and noticing moment to moment how the person construct experience on all levels - somatic, emotional, cognitive

1

Three Levels of Healing


- Cognition
- Limbic System - Emotions
- Brain Stem - Somatic



6

Assessing the Child's Attachment Age


Assessing the child's developmental age in terms of attachment



6

Phase 1 of Attachment Am I safe and loveable?

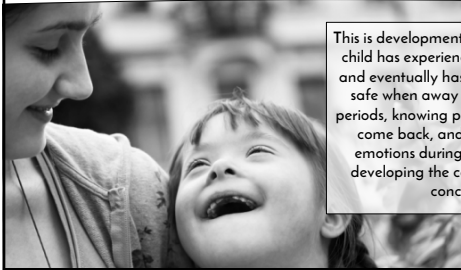
- Establishing physical regulation, begins to stretch time in positive moods, develops social skills, and increasingly, signals pleasure with eye contact, facial expression and body gestures.
- Not fear based, enjoying a reciprocal social style, looking to the adults' faces to gain safety.
- **WHAT BEHAVIOR DO YOU SEE THAT INDICATES THIS CHILD FEELS SAFE AND LOVEABLE?**



7



Phase 2 of Attachment - I Am The Joy of MY Life and MY Parents' Lives



This is developmentally 6-24 months where child has experienced separation anxiety and eventually has the felt sense of being safe when away from parent for short periods, knowing parent is reliable and will come back, and child can modulate emotions during time away - time of developing the capacity for focus and concentration

9



15-18 MONTHS

- In healthy dynamics, mother begins to inhibit behaviour so she can socialize toddler appropriately
- This curbs high Sympathetic Nervous System arousal and the Parasympathetic side helps create moderate arousal structures in the Autonomic Nervous System. This allows the state optimal for learning, restoration, and begins to inhibit impulsivity. - Ongoing Social Nervous System development
- If Mother isn't able to be calm, kind and firm the child doesn't develop these capacities optimally

10



Phase 3 of Attachment - I Do It My Way



- Still need closeness, sitting in laps, singing, cuddling, games, stories, massage, fun

- The work is for child to develop awareness of himself and his autonomy - age approx. 2 to 4 years
- It is the child's job to push away in this phase, but only after completing the first two stages. "No" is paramount at times - parents need to use their "smarts" to avoid major power struggles constantly AND give child choices when he is in charge on that particular choice - shoes or boots? Not barefoot in the snow!

11



**The parent:
the second person in the
attachment relationship**

5



Attachment is a biological based communications system with another person that is directly imprinting each other

The brief AAI will help parents' understand each other and their child more

13



Eventually I Like to Do

Brief Adult Attachment Interviews (AAI) with the parents

14



Child's History First

- I always see parents alone first and establish each parent's intention for bringing their child
- I never work with children alone - always the focus is the relationship between the child and parents.
- If separated, I want both parents' intention and permission, unless domestic violence or abuse
- **I AM THE SUPPORT FOR THE PARENTS, SO THEY CAN SUPPORT THE CHILD**

15



Ongoing relationship with the Parents



- About 1 in 4 sessions is with parents alone
- Often phone calls after children are asleep
- 'How did you understand the play of the session? (making meaning)
- How was that for you?



History: Start with Prenatal Period

- Conception - normalize unplanned pregnancies - they are 50%
- Prenatal and Birth history
- **THIS OFTEN BRINGS PARENTS INTO EMPATHY WITH EACH OTHER AND A CHILD THEY ARE ANGRY WITH**
- Developmental milestones - did child breastfeed, duration, when did she sleep through night, cross crawl, steps in communication development
- What brings them in now???

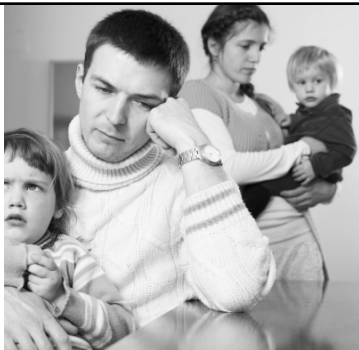
17



Studies on Marital Conflict

- In spite of attachment classification with either parent, children exposed to ongoing marital conflict have lowered levels of self regulation (intra parental strife)
- Conflict re co-parenting also predicts deficiencies in child's ability to self regulate, leading to impulse control problems, anxiety, and difficulties talking about angry or sad feelings

18



19



Particularly Potent Combination is Early Maternal Neglect followed by Paternal Abuse and Humiliation

Fathers are critically involved in toddlers regulation of aggression, esp. with boys, who are born with a greater aggressive endowment.

Dad's ability to regulate his own aggression supports the child to modulate and integrate his own burgeoning aggression. Teaches this esp. through play which is stimulating, gear shifting, disruptive, and has limits to it

20



Couple Relationships can Foster Security

- As partners consistently acknowledge and meet the other's needs, a felt sense of security can develop - if one partner is secure and other is insecure, over time, the internal working model of the insecure person can change to secure - usually takes about five years.
- This relationship is the **CONTAINER FOR THE CHILD** - the circle of safety, protection, **ACCURATE REFLECTION**, repair, and love.

21



Reflective Functioning

The capacity to monitor thought processes and motivations, in others, as well as oneself (self reflection) seems to be the key capacity that indicates resolution of one's early attachment experiences and what allows parents to do it differently with each other and their children

22



Insecure Children

- This internal working model is also "self fulfilling". The child who expects rejection gives little, acts mistrustful, ignores or misreads friendly overtures
- "This is how other people treat me, this is what I am worth"



23



It begins here and even earlier

24



Rebuilding Social Emotional Communication is Difficult for Biological Parents

- Parents may have attended therapy or grown in other ways and now are actively facing the impact of their past parenting with their preschool child
- They are trying new and difficult behaviors and are being rejected and challenged by their child - often feel their child doesn't love them, misinterpret behaviour



25 

Summary: Supporting Families when Parents want to Make Changes





- Be involved with baby/child and parents - YOU must care deeply and convey a heartfelt level of compassion to the parents
- Help parents connect empathetically with experiences of the baby/ child when in utero or very young - adoption, prematurity, illness, stress in the family



Steps to Altering these Patterns can be Learned through new Experiences


- Parents who have the best of intention for their children, love their children dearly, can have unresolved loss and trauma, that makes them prone to disorganizing behaviours - they are not crazy, they have unresolved issues that can be worked on. **WE ARE ON THEIR TEAM!**
- Getting a compassionate understanding of themselves can help them move towards congruent communication with their children



27 


Critical Steps in Support for the Preschooler

- **SAFETY AND PROTECTION:** a child's own resources are inadequate to deal with threat or perception of threat
- **LONG TERM COMMITMENT:** for at least TWO adults - a single mom cannot do this alone with her child AND REALLY NEEDS TWO OTHER COMMITTED ADULTS
- A somatic, regressive approach to address the unconscious, preverbal aspect of relational trauma - **THIS IS THE HEALING**

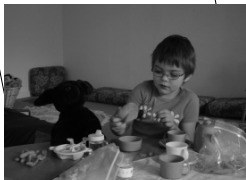
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Repatterning to .
"Normal Social Emotional
Communication"



Supporting Families





- Parents' current behaviors, emotions and beliefs are seen in the context of their own attachment history
- Engagement must have great flexibility - timing, duration of sessions, telephone contact, flexible termination, even help getting to appointments

34 


Supporting Families: Con't

- Help parents connect with their own early experiences - asking what they think they were like as a child of the age their child is, can be an entrance - also ask them to bring in pictures of themselves as babies and at the age of their preschooler
- Encourage self-reflectivity by showing interest and talking about their feelings/perspective - the parents are the key to healing for the children and we must keep them engaged: **EASY TO HAVE CHILD LOVE YOU - YOU NEED THE PARENT TO FEEL SUPPORTED SO THEY BRING THE CHILD**
- Help parent understand that a sense of safety and connection in the world is established very young



35 

**Attachment
is learned in times of pain
and efforts to re-pattern will
be tested in times of pain**

36 

Unresolved Losses

"I LOCKED THE DOOR
AND KEPT GRIEF
OUT, BUT GRIEF
CREPT IN AND
SHRUNK MY HEART

37



Supporting Families: Con't

- Repatterning is necessary as child feels fear/pain underneath all the behaviors
- *****Model and actively give empathetic responses to parents: touch, eye contact, pauses
- Talking for the child (in a speculative way when child isn't present) to enhance the parents' perspective
- Helping parents IMAGINE what is going on inside their child, and together problem solve about their child, (when child not present), with your support

38



Supporting Families: Con't

- Help parents recognize when the child is acting out based on traumatic history - especially times of separation, transitions
- CONVEY HOPE - GOOD CHILD, GOOD PARENTS

39



Project with 25 High Risk Families

- This somatic emotional based approach to child centred family therapy was documented with 25 families. All families were experiencing deficient social emotional communication.. All but one family moved to age appropriate social emotional communication.



40



Process: On Pretest all families scored in the DEFICIENT Category



Pre test was done independently with the referring agency and the therapist

24 of the 25 families completed the 15-20 sessions, 1 family dropped out when mom was admitted to rehab and child went into foster care



Results: Functional Emotional Assessment Scale Age 3-4 (Greenspan & DeGangi)

- FEASS Scale: Caregivers: Normal 42-54; At Risk 40-41; Deficient 0-39
- FEASS Scale: Child: Normal 48-66; At Risk 46-47; Deficient 0-45
- Combined Scores: Normal 93-120; At Risk 86-92, Deficient 0-85
- Results: 24 of 25 families had combined scores of 104- 86.



Nine Tools for Supporting Families with Preschoolers

(Castellino 02, Martin 03)

1. Acknowledging Feelings

2. Recognition and Empathy When Children are Relating to their History

3. Establishing Safety and Protection

4. Eye Contact

5. Nurturing Touch

6. Pausing and Pacing

7. Motion

8. Creating Self Attachment Sequences

9. Birth Games

43



Acknowledging Feelings: Expansion of Emotional Experiences

- No matter the age, a person must access and process feelings to bring flexibility of response, in the current moment - emotion organizes attachment behaviors - emotion orients us to others, motivates us and communicates our needs and longings, tells us what we fear
- Emotions need to be acknowledged, held and differentiated
- Emotions are the target and agents of change for repatterning at the somatic levels necessary - for both child and parent

44



Children Need their Feelings Validated by an Adult



- The adult response needs to accept the content of what the child is feeling
- Anger needs to be taken seriously and treated as a signal that the child wants/needs something
- If the want can't be met, we can see the anger as an understandable response to not getting what he wants

45



46



Most children will stay in a challenging behavior until the safe adult acknowledges the feeling that the child is expressing - then the child knows they are heard and that they are not alone in the world

47



Ruby in Tunnel Initially: Session VIDEO CLIP

- Acknowledging Feelings
- Safety and Protection
- Recognizing when child is relating to her history

49



Ruby Being a Baby, Receiving Protection

- After the prenatal work in the tunnel she begins 'being a baby', some nurturing, and being protected here.
- Relating to her history



Ruby with Protection Games: SessionVideo Clip

- Accepting nurturing and then protection and safety

53



Ruby as a little Baby

- Acknowledging feelings
- Empathy and recognition of her history
- Expanded emotional experience currently
- Mom with another layer of support

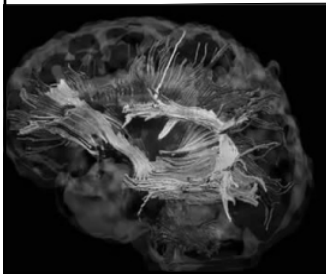


Ruby back in the tunnel, repatterning her time in the womb

- Acknowledging feelings
- Empathy and recognition of history
- Safety and protection, love
- Accurate reflection
- Mom with support



Eye Contact



The most potent place in the child's experience: reciprocal influence directly into the emotional centres leads to positive emotional excitation and vitality

59



Forcing Eye contact with a Child

- Children need to be invited and charmed into eye contact
- Forcing eye contact can lead to the child feeling shamed
- Forcing can teach the child to go away (dissociate) while appearing present
- Asking for brief eye contact for a direction is useful



60

Touch




Essential for emotional and physiological regulation




Touch is Primary for Repatterning Attachment

- Bubble baths, towelling, shampooing
- Massage - feet, hands with the whole family on the parent's bed
- Back and shoulder massage
- Brushing and combing hair
- Head on shoulder, lap watching TV
- Puppy piles, wrestling
- Messy materials like sand, water, clay
- Games like "Twister", ball balancing so children touch adults in a fun way




62





Smell

- A very primitive sense that can support repatterning
- A fearful child can use a handkerchief or item with Mom's scent to give support and the reality Mom will return when they are separated - preschool, or a longer time away
- Sleeping is sometimes helped, if sleeping with Mom's scent, or bed in parent's room
- Coming home to good smells from pre school etc.

63



Pauses and Pacing (Co-Regulation)

Pausing: Time for Adults and Children to Calm Down and Change Behaviors

- Time out (when this means isolation) is a strategy that should only be used with securely attached children and maybe not then
- Children with attachment difficulties do not have self calming strategies internally and further isolation is traumatizing
- Time in's: in lap, or "time out" for object e.g. throwing an object
- Parents pausing: "I can't continue to play when toys are being thrown"
- Parents in proximity, and child sitting close without focus on her

65



When to Take Pauses

When there is a question of safety

When the parents begin to feel overwhelmed

When communication needs clarifying or begins to breakdown

Castellino, '02



Pausing is a Good Time for Touch and Smell Rituals

- It is hard to stop, calm and think before acting - get the child help
- A squeeze toy or a small stuffy, cat or dog
- A ritual object like a necklace, ring, special stone, a photo, or a scarf that has fragrance on it
- Ritual objects, like a small elf with magical powers
- A circular piece of carpet - their space with parent nearby

67



Preschool Children can Learn a Practice of Relaxation - with Parent

- Child and parent yoga
- Deep muscle relaxation with a tape
- Karate or Akido
- Candle meditation with parent
- Using special songs, mantras, logos and prayer
- Heart Smarts - heart songs, photos of different feelings, posters
- Heart Math - we often need to provide the resource



68



Motion: A Subtle but Important Element in repatterning



Preschoolers love rocking and swinging, especially with eye contact - reinforces security
Piggy back, "horsey" rides, swinging, jumping into arms

69

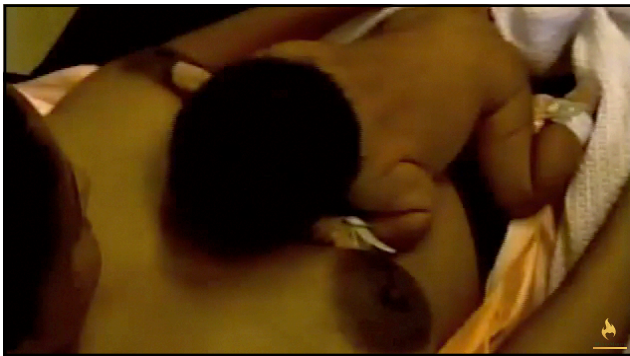


Creating Self Attachment Sequences



Child uses her will, her legs to come face to face, heart to heart with parent: claiming parent as attachment figure

70



Annie (with Stepgrandfather)

- Self Attachment Sequence after many moves in her life
- Expansion of emotional experiences
- Empathy and Recognition of child's history
- Motion
- Eye contact





Creating Birth Games



All manner of tunnel games, squeeze through games into parents or caregivers' arms
Adult reflection in scary places, sometimes adult presence



Additional Parental Support

- Parents may benefit from individual counseling to support resolution of their early trauma
- Parents may benefit from couples counseling
- Don't hesitate to find appropriate therapist to refer to and support referral work - or work with parents yourself if you have the training to do this



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"Healing Early Developmental Trauma" Video Series

- 13 Modules - 78 hours of video, course notes, research articles, references, and 12 monthly group support calls.
- www.myrnalmartin.net

Supplemental Slides for Background

Interactive Exercise: How might you use these tools?

- Angry 4 year old boy who is chronically aggressive towards mother
- Mother and son attachment is disorganized, controlling punitive
- Father and son attachment is avoidant
- Mother on AAI is insecure ambivalent, Father is avoidant
- How do you imagine the family dance will go?
- How would you work with this family in your setting?

80

Example - Exercise: Con't

- Child misbehaves, angry with mother
- Mother tries to manage behavior and gives up
- Father intervenes with firmness
- Mother "protects" son
- Father gets angry with mother
- Son retreats angrily, and remains controlling with mother
- Mother and father's relationship is marked by conflict about the son and disengagement

81



Support Strategies

- Help parents see and reflect on pattern (with parents alone)
- Move discussion from behavior management to mother's fear of son's aggression, controlling behavior; loss of her own mother (for example), and families' experience of loss (parents only)
- Discussion of father's pattern of withdrawal when he was hurt or distressed as child as his parents weren't there for him (parents only)



Bring parents together to help father understand and soothe mother in her loss and vis versa (parents only)

Develop plan where father is supported not to withdraw, soothes mother's fear, and supports her to take a stronger position with her son, but not take over (parents only)

Many repetitions with child and parents in play room where mom meets child, dad stays engaged

Brief ancillary work with mother on own grief issues

Mother supported to work with son in parent role to soothe son's distress and complete attachment behavior rather than son being in "parent role"

Father supports mother




Mother also steps back when father engaging with son, realizing she doesn't have to protect son from father


Mother and father planning regular dates, and perhaps couples or individual therapy for parents for further resolution of their early issues.

Note shift from therapy being centered on power, authority, boundary violations, to intimacy and the effects of unresolved loss and fear of parenting



Background Material that will not be covered in the presentation




85 

Disrupted Attachment


45 - 50% % of children in our culture experience disrupted attachment


80% of maltreated children develop disorganized attachment

86 

Disorganized Preschoolers


- Low frustration tolerance and self control.
- Disoriented in approach to problems
- Under stress will see physical manifestations of disorganization - tiptoe with stiff legs; swing arms stiffly; make odd, gasping noises; put hands in mouth, rolling tongue in mouth; biting self, or clothing; circling aimlessly.
- Aggression has a defensive quality - grab or push but show obvious expression of fear or anxiety, behavior not simply an aim to hurt or to get something



87 

Parents may not physically abuse their children but still have disorganized attachment patterns

- Parents, with significant unresolved trauma or grief, enter triggered places of anger more easily, more rapidly, and remain longer and do more harmful behaviors
- When the adult recovers, the repair of the disconnection is less likely to occur
- Most common with mental illness in parent; chronically depressed mother

88 

Children's Contribution

Child may have a serious illness, have experienced a great deal of pain and separation and be unwilling to trust

Child may have neurological or other congenital problems - risk is higher and seems to be related to how well parents can work through their feelings about the diagnosis

89

Disorganized Attachment in Maltreated Children

These children have overall smaller brain sizes, damaged corpus callosum connecting the two hemispheres, and impaired growth of the regulating GABA fibers to the hypothalamic nuclei. This ongoing overwhelming stress has damaged the brain as cortisol is toxic to growing neurons (Teicher '02)

90

Neurobiology of Physical Abuse

- Same neurobiologic system that regulates attachment regulates aggression
- Leads to emotionally focused coping where the aggression regulating functions of the prefrontal cortex are unavailable and the amygdala directly connects with the hypothalamic axis.
- Leads to sympathetic hyperarousal, associated with intense terror and intense rage
- This is the "hot blooded impulsive rage" as seen in people experiencing adult borderline personality disorder

91

Neurobiology of Abuse

- Child is stimulated into rage by any aggressive eye gaze, tone, or experiences of shame/humiliation or threat
- By age 5 - 6, definite impairments in processing faces - can't see sad or fearful faces, and has a bias to perceiving aggression

92

Neurobiology of Neglect

- Neglect creates profound dissociative states, a dysregulation of the brain flight systems - the escape when there is no escape
- Extremely damaging to long term nervous system function as associated with severe hypoarousal and cell death
- Child will be unable to experience empathy, learn from past mistakes
- Secrecy and isolation are reinforced by fear
- This pattern can convert to aggression about age 11 in an attempt to raise their arousal level, or stay more in a PTSD type response
- Associated with panic attacks in adolescence, and drug and alcohol dependence



93



Disorganized Attachment in Pre School Children

- OFTEN takes till age 4 for children develop a strategy of surviving with the parent and within the particular dynamics of their family system, both child and parent will know both roles and may enact either role in different circumstances.
- Controlling punitive
- Controlling caregiving

94



Disorganized Preschool Children by 4

- Play is often learned in context of relationship so she may not be able to develop a coherent play strategy, will be rigid, and seek out peers that can fit into familiar pattern.
- Punitive seek out submissive friend
- Caregiving seek out submissive roles



95



Controlling Punitive

- Child is bossy, in a rejecting or humiliating way, with the parent
- Child has learned that although parent is angry and threatens, she does not follow through with threats
- Parent feels the child is in control of the relationship, as child will simply refuse to comply or become angry and hostile himself



96



Controlling Punitive

- This style develops at a younger age, often by 3 1/2 or 4, as child requires less ability to regulate
- In two parent families, child may align with one parent, who shows hostile controlling behavior with the other parent, and join in demeaning this parent. When alone with the hostile parent the child may adapt the controlling caregiving strategy

97



Controlling Caregiving

- In preschool years, there often is a power struggle which is lost by the child; then child becomes hypervigilant to mother's interest, so she can be close and gain some control over mother's moods
- Child is often older, or a girl, when this strategy is used as it requires more self regulation and role taking skills
- The Parent is more domineering or physically abusive, or can be very dissociated (e.g. drug addict)



98



Controlling Caregiving: Con't

- If pleasing slips, parent often becomes frightening again
- Child will be overly bright, coy, disarming behaviors, smiling shyly
- When too much stress or when child can't manage the parent, the behavior will break down and revert to controlling punitive
- Child will try to bring parent out of dissociated states
- Relationship often seems like child peers



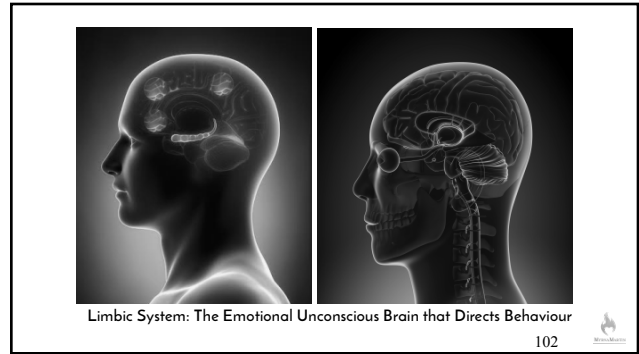
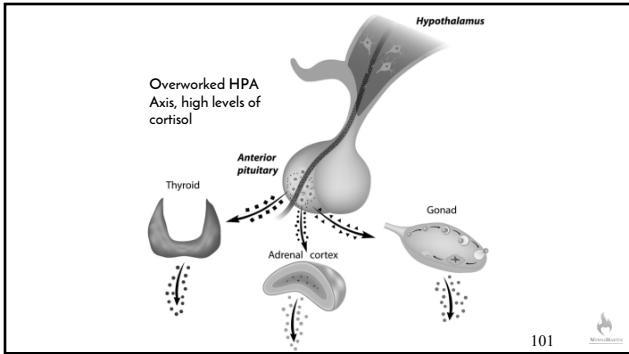
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Disorganized Attachment in PRE SCHOOL Children

- May show sequential displays of contradictory behavior patterns e.g. child approaches parent with a mixed pattern of wanting contact and ignoring, with freezing or dazed behaviors, unpredictable, asymmetrical movement patterns, stress movements like head banging, rocking, hair twisting - these patterns still observable in preschoolers
- Preschoolers are unpredictable, aggressive, angry or very withdrawn, often with contradictory and unorganized patterns of behavior
- **THE ISSUE IS THAT THE PARENT IS THE SOURCE OF FEAR AND THE ONLY SOURCE OF COMFORT**

100





Parent's Behavior

- Prolonged separation/threats to withdraw
- Increased when parents' are separated and child moves from home to home when under 18 mos.
- Parent is frightened - depressed, domestic violence or high levels of conflict, doesn't know how to manage child
- Parent is frightening - sudden looming over or threatening behaviors, rapid movements, flinching, incongruency, maltreatment
- Parent does not repair misattunements

103

Adults Need to do Their Grieving and Repair

- Without grieving past losses, the next connection can't really be made
- Grief is a GIANT that stalks us until we work through it
- Adults, like the child, and the children they were, want to avoid feeling the pain of the loss
- Parents really need support for this - we can't just "fix" the child!!! - IT IS A WHOLE FAMILY SYSTEM

104

A Visit to a Special Person or Spot

- Some children are helped at preschool or home by a visit out of the situation with their parent or teacher assistant - to another place - this can't be punitive or shaming
- Change the energy. e.g. let's run around the house; let's splash ourselves with cold water; let's have a bubble bath (together or alone with toys, music)

105



Action Video Games and Violent Movies

- Children who have witnessed violence, esp. if they actually saw blood, will often love these, and even preschoolers will have them
- These trigger the imprinted neurobiological reaction to occur, and this perpetuates the belief the world is full of danger and inescapable violence

106



Stages of Learning to 'Defend' Territory - Age 2-9

- Simply hitting or grabbing
- Use of verbal aggression
- Bribery - **STARTS ABOUT AGE 3**
- Collecting allies, and ganging up - **STARTS ABOUT AGE 4**
- Cooperating, and being inclusive, but able to set a boundary - **BY AGE 6**
- Children need some rules set about these actions, and also need us to realize these are steps to higher socialization



All Toddlers will Bite, Hit, Pull Hair

- Effective parents respond calmly, firmly and with consistent limits and no overt shaming
- Parental disapproval creates negative feelings in the secure child who normally has a felt sense of well being - stress is induced
- Unacceptable behavior lessens
- Conscience and impulse control develops
- Always followed by positive reunion to provide optimal level of stress for maturation of the ANS functions - optimal flexibility



Secure Attachment Permits a Response System that is Open

- Child develops trust in self and others
- Can perceive, reflect on and integrate a variety of emotional experiences and continually integrate feedback from others
- This results in increasingly complex social cognitive structures and responses to an ever widening array of challenges



Securely Attached Preschool Children

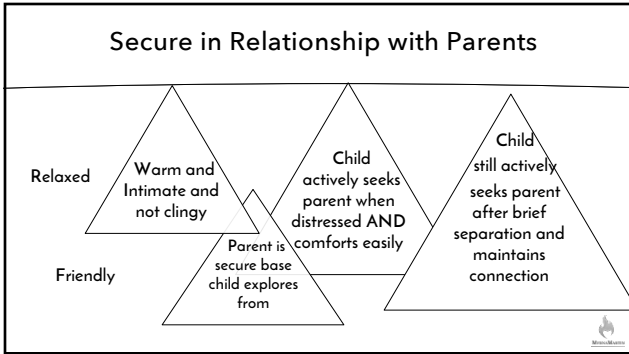
- Will hit, kick or bite at age 2, uncommon at age 3,4
- Conscience and impulse control are developing and are being practiced and getting stronger as the child matures
- Securely attached six year olds can be empathic and helpful to others, including other children - begins at age 3
- When interacting with parents, a pattern of "expansions" will be observed - "yeah, plus, you know what?"



Secure Attachment

- Preparing to leave the nest and stand on own in social relationships with other children
- Securely attached four year olds especially express resistance and anger often. They say "It's dumb and I hate it", "I hate you". They are really learning that words have power: sassiness, whining, arguing, bad language, and baby talk all surface during this period





Avoidant: 20% of Middle Class Populations

Higher in populations dealing with poverty

- ### Avoidant Attachment
- Child shows little or no interest when parent leaves or she is leaving, and actively avoids or ignores parent upon reunion. Or, is neutral yet polite...answering questions with a "yes", "thank you" but no expansion, little or no physical contact
 - Parent also avoids intimate contact, may ignore or look away from the child
 - Both treat the relationship as if it is merely instrumental, little emotional connection
 - Communication is brief, and impersonal
 - Toys are used to ward off parental advances

- ### Avoidant Attachment: Con't
- Child has learned to keep his attachment system dampened because the prospect of further rejection is too terrible to risk
 - When the child is stressed to his limit, the rage he feels may not be contained and he is likely to unleash his anger at other children
 - This child may become depressed, but depression is masked by compulsiveness, aggression or other symptoms

The Defense System in an Avoidant Attachment Child

- Child views himself as angry, spiteful and unloveable, and can't feel he is sad and hungry for love. Then, the child can't sympathize with himself.
- This view is reinforced when the child is punished, hears harsh words or the overt exasperation of others
- Child may look calm but his heart rate is increased, and cortisol levels are elevated



Insecure Avoidant Preschoolers

- Tend to be noncompliant and to disobey rules
- Sometimes, neutrally polite, with authority figures
- Often isolate from group, do not seek interaction
- No close friendships that are important to child
- Can be excessively angry (outbursts) at times in social situations if they feel pushed
- Have control in non-social situations



Insecure Avoidant Children: Con't



- May be very competent in interest areas that are more solitary, like lego, or bike riding
- When in pain or upset withdraw and do not seek help
- Absence of warm, physical contact with others
- Manages well away from parents



Insecure Ambivalent Preschoolers

- Child, even at age 3, is still be distressed by brief separation, esp. if other stresses are occurring, clinging to parent and saying he doesn't want her to go, may cry and not engage for some time. Some children may even imagine that they or their parent will be hurt or killed
- Child seeks contact upon reunion, but cannot easily share experiences with parent/parents and may push them angrily away - proximity is linked with aggression.
- Parent may try to engage by asking questions and child may refuse to answer



Insecure Ambivalent: Con't

The child's hurt and rage is volatile and unmanageable at times. He never develops the sense that mom/dad can contain his overwhelming emotions, that he can have a tantrum and hate her/him, but that she can "hold" the anger, that the tantrum will pass, without causing permanent damage - if he had this experience he could learn to manage these rages himself.

He eventually learns, through his anxiety, to disguise anger into passive aggressive behaviors and feelings of envy, resentment, with occasional extreme outbursts by about age 7-8.



Insecure Ambivalent Attachment: Con't

- Child may act affectedly cute or ingratiating
- Little flexibility in communication in the relationship, and happens far less than in secure relationships, with little spontaneity and a very restricted range of subject matter
- Child is still "wildly" addicted to their mother and still trying to make her change, which sets up various unhealthy patterns - including care taking, and raging
- True cause of school phobia - child is afraid of losing her mother, or that the mother will be unbearably lonely
- Attachment style of many adolescent anorexic girls



Clingy Child/Touch Phobic child

Tactile defensive child: never punish for avoidance of touch - find ways for playful touch but don't accept lack of touch as a way of life children have shut down sensory receptors and need tactile awareness

Clingy: This child needs lots of touch from parents and others
 Try to stay close and touch often, when other adults present in a preschool setting
 Invite child to touch you in public situations - hold hand etc., use a hand held

23




The Defense System in an Insecure Ambivalent Child

- Fundamental experience is rejection, so feeling of inferiority is ever present. Shame is the natural result of parental rejection - this child has to defend against it by a "humiliated fury" alternating with a "humiliated approach".
- Alienate others with hypervigilance and clinging - longing for connection is always ON, but then hard to receive




<p>This state induces negative effect in a child, with PNS and SNS arousal occurring at the same time</p>	<p>Child can not ask for needs to be met or show longings</p>	<p>The child can not auto regulate and experiences helplessness and hopelessness - self is inadequate</p>	<p>Child will grow up to use external objects for support, in attempts to self regulate i.e. drugs</p>
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125 


Insecure/Ambivalent: Con't


- Poor social skills, tend to be dependent on others, not so well liked by other children
- Impulsive, low frustration tolerance
- Less confident, assertive and able to problem solve at their age level



Insecure/Ambivalent: Con't


- Need sensitive care giving by teachers in play groups or preschools, day cares, often difficult to calm down
- Often miss parents, even at age 8 or 9, and seem helpless and tense as a result - think about 'Will my parent be available if I need her? Will she respond to my feelings? Do I have the power to affect her to help me?'





Avoidant and Ambivalent Children have an Organized way of Relating

- By age 3, these children may 'cope', albeit unhappily, in usual situations, unless some stressful event occurs in the family such as a divorce, remarriage, illness in parent or child, frequent moves or another major loss or trauma that overwhelms the child in current time
- Then the defensive style of the child will escalate, esp. if the parent is even more unavailable, due to her own stress. Then child will develop more extreme behaviors



Attachment and Shame

- A child whose needs are unmet feels there is something wrong with him - the very fact of not being attuned to is a shame inducing experience and when he feels anger/hatred towards his parent he further becomes defective
- Shame persists into adulthood in a very un-evolved form



Shame is the Response when an Emotion is not Dealt with Effectively

- A child must be able to express negative emotions and be have them responded to by the parent in a meaningful way, without being isolated, or made guilty
- If not, the emotion becomes ugly to him and must be disavowed
- Parents cannot tolerate seeing their own unmet needs expressed by their children, or the anger and distress their children express about these unmet needs, so they overreact or become dismissive



Many Families are Over-scheduled Outside of the Family

And under-scheduled within the family
(Clarke, '99)

131



Time...What Children Need

- Time in: time spent deliberately building connection
- Time Out: this can be like a pause - time spent to self regulate, calm, think. Time out in this way is very very useful time out as a way to isolate is never useful
- Time With: time in activities with others - may or may not build connection

132



When Trust Has Been Broken

- If disordered attachment, there are many losses: then trust is maladaptive to the brain
- The child will not remember, in the way we recognize memory, the brain blocks memory, as to remember everything is to feel like you will DIE
- Children's mysterious behavior will be showing us e.g. refusal to eat, or eating voraciously, speaking rarely if she was threatened about telling about sexual abuse
- ALL BEHAVIOR HAS IMPORTANT MEANING

133



Real Time has Quantity and Quality



- The idea of quality time was created as adult living in this culture got very fast.
- It can mean time at the convenience of the parent, and this doesn't necessarily support attachment because of its top down nature...
- The child can become an object to be acted upon, not equally important to relate with, when the child needs/wants interaction.

134



135



Slaying all the external and internal alligators

136



I'm Safe,
I Can Relax

137



Children often attempt empowerment through anger and opposition

- Children need to see that the adults have the capacity to deal with stress and to demonstrate self control - being in control when child is out of control
- Parents can respond through strengthening the container of their relationship so it can hold these energies by
 - Keeping frequent eye contact and touch
 - Making 'I' statements
 - Being a model...from womb time we are modeling what our children will be and feel (Castellino, 04)

138



Anger

- Who here ever felt angry with your parents growing up?
- Who here has felt angry with your own children?
- Who here has perceived that their children, even as babies, were angry with them?

139



Parents Need to Take the Sovereign Role

- If parents hold clear roles and boundaries and feel it in their felt sense of their body, children will feel it as well
- In single parent families, this parent doesn't need to try to fill the void but she does need to be in the place of empowerment in her parental role - "I will protect, shelter, nurture you, I am thoroughly committed to you, and no matter what you do, I will do my job"
- Single parents definitely need the ongoing support of another adult or two.

140



Roles and Responsibilities

- Need to be tied to the developmental level the child is exhibiting
- Set the child up for success and slowly increase privileges and responsibilities
- Give clear simple directions with a time frame



Games

Games that are tied to child's developmental level - a 10 year old who has been in foster care may never have developed object constancy. He may love peek a boo, hide and seek, stories like "Goodnight Moon" and Magic games, Find Waldo

A 12 year old may love lego or blocks with a parent.



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144

